My dear Maria Rome Mon 15 Jan. 1872

I was most unwilling to tell you my bad news until my "good fortune" (which you always call it) brought me some good news & now I have that gratifying news

I dare say you know that the "Lords of the Treasury" gave me only £80 a year pension so that on the 8th inst I was literally penniless, my rent being exactly the amount of my pension £80 so I went to bed in great agitation, but I'm glad to tell that I awoke in the morn. with a lucky thought which is setting all right — I offer'd the lease of my house to Mr Parker the antiquarian who has been some time lecturing in my large saloon but I made my offer on the condition that I should have the 2 beautiful fountain rooms rent free — they agreed at once & so I have thus saved £30 in rent — I then made known to my servant woman that she must leave as I could only pay 1/a the sum to her

she is finding another master, meanwhile I can have another at a less sum & have already engaged her -

So now I can set down to my painting at 4 Shillings a day without any worry, for I need repose - the agitation of the last fortnight produced an attack of Diahrrea (if I had not declined a great dinner, might have caused my death

As regards yourself (for I confess in these days you have been my greatest anguish) I have referred your case to my 3 dear children that they give you £10 a year each & 2 will contrive to do the same & so you'll not have any change except your great concern for me My Son Walter insists on my case going before Parliament for its injustice, but I say no - for the 1st Lord of the Treasury is Mr Gladstone & I know that he is bent on reforming all the great Sinecures of the Govt therefore there's no hope of the Lords going back

Meanwhile I feel that I can go on comfortably even on this sum of £1.14 a week including your £10 – My children will say if they know it that I was imprudent in giving £50 to poor dear Tom – but I did not & could not then know that so much evil was in store for me

Yet as usual I have fallen on my feet, my painting is sure to produce me something & I hear that the Roman water company will soon pay interest – With a certain income however small one can always cut & contrive & as my habits have never been expensive so now I have little to change fortunately & can easily adapt myself to the [illegible] of my usual income, you'll say 'tis hard but I dont allow myself to think of that, for I am aware that I had no actual right at all to a pension so I am quite content

Your letter of the 6th I got yesterday & it is evident that you did not know of the great blow I had received nor should you now if I could help it – but there may be some

What a long gossip I am having with you but I know you'll be entertained with my letter

We have most lovely weather & the Carnival is very fine – the maskers singing & dancing all night

Tis a great happiness that I have been able to meet this conflict with strength patience & discretion, for altho' on the 8th Jan.y I felt myself penniless as my pension was due exact amount of my rent is yet now all is well contrived – my masterpiece was at once offering my lease to Mr. Porter on the condition that I should have the fountain rooms rent free for my house is worth double now –

I dont venture to go to the Carnival for altho I can walk & do all in a quiet way, yet any thing violent upsets me so I seek quiet in my every way – In writing this I have had only one interruption so [illegible] the change, before I should have had 20 [illegible] my sights continues really good, my hand is steady & my walking enjoyable – I enjoy this blessed change more on your account for what would you have done (?

Your loving brother Joe